Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00204 240440Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------114031 240453Z /14
O P 240411Z JAN 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9175
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0204

EXDIS

FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: CONTACT GROUP CONSIDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN
RESPONSE TO WESTERN FIVE DEMARCHE

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 0083 (B) STATE 017283
(C) MCHENRY-HELMAN JANUARY 23 TELECON
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PAGE 02 USUN N 00204 240440Z

1. CONTACT GROUP MET PM JANUARY 23 TO DISCUSS SOUTH AFRICAN
RESPONSE (REF A) TO WESTERN FIVE PROPOSAL FOR PROXIMITY TALKS AT
FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL. AMBASSADOR MCHENRY BEGAN MEETING BY
EXPRESSING DOUBTS, SHARED BY DEPARTMENT AND USUN (REF C), AS TO
WHETHER SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSE MEETS THE CONDITIONS
REQUIRED FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL TALKS TO TAKE

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

PLACE. THOSE DOUBTS ARE TWO-FOLD: (A) THE DELAY IN
ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTONS IS EXPLICITLY LIMITED TO SEVERAL
DAYS AND HANGS LIKE A SWORD OVER THE TALKS; (B) THE
LANGUAGE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PROPOSED STATEMENT IMPLIES
THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ELECTION DATE IS A UNILATERAL
ACT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL -- ALTHOUGH THE TERM
"OTHER CONSIDERATION" COULD BE GENEROUSLY INTERPRETED.
NEITHER POINT SEEMED ALTOGETHER CONSISTENT WITH A DETER-
MINATION TO REACH AN AGREED SETTLEMENT.
2. THE REST OF GROUP, WHILE EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR OUR
CONCERNS, WAS CLEARLY NOT SERIOUSLY BOTHERED BY THEM.
WITH REGARD TO THE FIRST QUESTION ABOVE, OTHERS GENERALLY
AGREED THAT IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAD
INDICATED THEIR INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH AN ELECTION DATE
ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWING THE PROXIMITY TALKS; HOWEVER, THEY
FELT THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE ABOUT IT. NONE SEEMED
WILLING TO REPROACH SOUTH AFRICA ON THIS POINT. REGARDING
THE SECOND QUESTION, THERE WAS GREATER CONCERN. ALL AGREED
THAT PROPOSED SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT PRESENTED SUBSTANTIVE
PROBLEMS, ALTHOUGH BRITISH INITIALLY INTERPRETED SOUTH
AFRICAN LANGUAGE SO GENEROUSLY AS NOT TO BE INCONSISTENT
WITH AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. GROUP AGREED
THAT FIVE MUST AT LEAST REITERATE TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS
THE WESTERN FIVE POSITION THAT THE DETERMINATION OF AN
ELECTION DATE AND, IN FACT, ANY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ELECTORAL PROCESS, MUST BE MADE TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE
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UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP
WERE RELUCTANT TO TAKE A FIRMER POSITION--SUBSCRIBING
RATHER TO THE BELIEF THAT, HOWEVER UNSATISFACTORY THE
SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN FIVE DEMARCHE MAY BE,
THE FIVE SHOULD NOT REACT IN A WAY WHICH MIGHT POSSIBLY JEOPARDIZE
THE PROXIMITY TALKS. THE CONTACT GROUP WILL MEET AM
JANUARY 24 TO CONSIDER VIEWS OF CAPITALS TO SOUTH AFRICAN
RESPONSE AND POSSIBLY TO DRAFT TALKING POINTS FOR A
FURTHER DEMARCHE TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS ON THE TEXT OF THE
PROPOSED STATEMENT.

3. TOWARD CONCLUSION OF CONTACT GROUP MEETING, MCHENRY
TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRESS AGAIN THE UNITED STATES'
CONCERN OVER
THE PRESS LEAKS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN RECENT
DAYS. MCHENRY EMPHASIZED THE DAMAGE WHICH SUCH LEAKS
CAUSE, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO MAINTAINING CREDIBILITY
WITH SWAPO, AND REITERATED US HOPE THAT THE LAST OF SUCH
LEAKS FROM THE FIVE HAS OCCURRED. NEEDLESS TO SAY, UK
WAS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE IN LIGHT OF TODAY'S NEW YORK
TIMES STORY BY R.W. APPLE DATELINED LONDON (SEPTEL). AMB.
MURRAY (UK) STATED THAT HE HAD QUESTIONED LONDON

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

ON SOURCE OF STORY BUT, NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, FOUND NO ONE
WHO ADMITTED RESPONSIBILITY.

COMMENT. AT MID-DAY AMBASSADOR MCHENRY ENCOUNTERED
UN COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA AHTISAARI. AHTISAARI, WHO WAS
ON HIS WAY TO LUNCH WITH UK MISOFF, COMPLAINED HEATEDLY

ABOUT THE SLANT TAKEN BY BRITISH OFFICIALS IN THE APPLE
STORY. HE COULD THINK OF FEW APPROACHES BETTER CALCULATED
TO UNDERMINE THE CONTACT GROUP'S ALREADY SHAKY CREDIBILITY
WITH SWAPO AND AFRICANS. LATER, AT CONTACT GROUP MEETING,
UK MISOFF ACKNOWLEDGED THAT AHTISAARI HED MADE SIMILAR
POINT TO HIM. END COMMENT.
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PAGE 04 USUN N 00204 240440Z

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Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

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20 Mar 2014
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